

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending in this application.

The Office Action states that claims 3, 6-9, 11, 13, 15-17 and 20 recite allowable subject matter. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 16-18 are amended and claims 21-23 are added. Claims 6, 8, 16 and 17 have been rewritten in independent form. Claims 1 and 18 have been amended to even more clearly distinguish over the applied references. Reconsideration based on the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. The Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 10, 14, 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,567,169 to Schober in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,432,849 to Endo et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited combination fails to disclose or suggest all of the features recited in claim 1. Specifically, an arrangement in which a measurement section specifies a horizontal datum plane based upon the kinematic coupling pins and a vertical datum plane vertical to the horizontal datum plane, and measures the shape of the carrier based upon the horizontal datum plane and the vertical datum plane is not disclosed or suggested by the references.

Schober discloses a method of and device for determining the warpage of a wafer. Schober states "[t]he support means 6 further include three support members 11, 12 and 13 which are formed by pins which are connected to the carrier plate 7 in a manner not shown. The free ends of the support members 11, 12 and 13 formed by pins are shown rounded off and lie in a plane that runs parallel with the reference plane 4." See column 2, lines 43-48. Thus, while Schober may disclose a horizontal datum plane as a reference plane 4, Schober does not disclose or suggest a vertical datum plane that is vertical to the horizontal datum

plane specified based upon the kinematic coupling pins. Schober also does not disclose or suggest that the measurement section measures the shape of the carrier based upon the horizontal datum plane and the vertical datum plane vertical.

Endo et al. discloses kinematic coupling pins 54 (column 7, lines 24-33). However, Endo et al. also does not disclose or suggest a vertical datum plane that is vertical to the horizontal datum plane, based upon the kinematic coupling pins.

With regard to claim 18, Schober only discloses that the optical axis of the optical microscope 21 is vertical to the plane of the wafer 3. See Fig. 2. In addition, Endo et al. does not disclose any imaging device. Consequently, the combination of Schober and Endo et al. does not disclose or suggest that an optical axis of the imaging section is substantially parallel to a plane of a wafer which is loaded into the carrier. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 10, 14, 18 and 19 is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schober, in view of Endo, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,822,213 to Huynh. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Because claim 5 depends from claim 1, claim 5 is patentable at least for the reasons stated regarding claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 5 is respectfully requested.

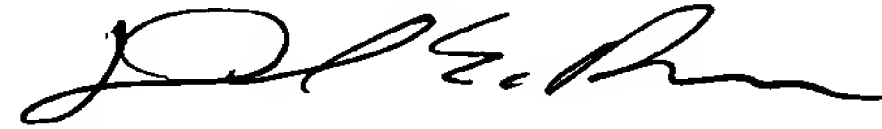
With regard to new claims 21-23, Schober and Endo et al. do not disclose or suggest a vertical datum plane as explained above, and thus also, do not disclose or suggest that the stage comprises a surface which coincides with, or is parallel to, a vertical datum plane.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-23 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time
Amendment Transmittal

Date: January 8, 2004

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